

# What's New in the MPDC

SEPTEMBER 4, 2001

## DC LAUNCHES STEPPED-UP EFFORTS TO COMBAT DRUNKEN DRIVING

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*Drinking and driving don't mix. Penalties include fines, suspended licenses, and jail time. Find out more about the laws against drinking and driving on-line at:*

*[mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/duihome.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/duihome.shtm)*

With large numbers of motorists expected on the roads this Labor Day weekend - and with some of them choosing to drink and drive — the District of Columbia is launching a major effort to combat drunken driving year-round using new technology and public awareness partnerships. The new equipment includes Chemical Analysis Testing (CAT) vans, passive alcohol sensors, roadside breath testers and the planned use of in-car video cameras in some police cruisers. The CAT vans provide blood

alcohol content (BAC) testing and offender processing services in the field, at sobriety checkpoints and in support of individual traffic stops where drunken driving is suspected. The passive alcohol sensors are used by police officers to detect the possible presence of alcohol in drivers, so that more complete and sophisticated sobriety tests can be run. The new push in DC coincides with National Sobriety Checkpoint Week, a MADD-sponsored campaign to encourage safe and sober driving during the historically dangerous Labor Day weekend. The National Safety Council predicts that 474 people are likely to die on the nation's roads over the Labor Day weekend, with half of those deaths expected to be alcohol-related. Historically, just over half of the annual traffic fatalities in DC involve alcohol. Get details about this new initiative at:

[mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp](http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp)

*Labor Day sobriety checkpoints are among 18 checkpoints the MPD will conduct this year. The Metropolitan Police Department will be conducting sobriety checkpoints from approximately 8:00 pm to 4:00 am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights, using the Chemical Analysis Testing vans and other new equipment.*

## WEEKDAY CURFEW BEGINS AN HOUR EARLIER

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With the start of the new school year, the MPDC reminds young people and their families that DC's teen curfew begins an hour earlier on weeknights. Beginning Labor Day weekend, curfew for young people under the age of 17 begins at 11:00 pm on Sunday through Thursday nights and continues until 6:00 am. On weekend nights, curfew begins at 12:01 am, and ends at 6 the next morning. Under the Juvenile Curfew Act of 1995, persons under the age of 17 cannot remain in or on a street, park or other outdoor public place, in a vehicle or on the premises of any establishment within DC during curfew hours, unless they are involved in certain exempted activities. The law applies to all young people in the District during curfew hours, regardless of whether they live inside or outside the city. The law provides penalties for chronic offenders—both young people who violate curfew and parents or legal guardians who knowingly permit a minor to violate the law. Penalties for young people include up to 25 hours of community service. A parent or legal guardian who violates the law faces up to a \$500 fine, community service or both. Information about the District's curfew law, including alternative resources for young people, is available on-line at:

[mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/curfew.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/curfew.shtm)

## NATIONAL STOP ON RED WEEK; RED-LIGHT RUNNING DOWN IN DC

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The number of drivers running red lights at District of Columbia intersections equipped with photo enforcement cameras continues to be dramatically lower today than it was when DC's red-light camera program began two years ago. The number of violations caught on film at the 39 intersections with red-light cameras has dropped from nearly 38,000 per month to about 17,500 per month over the course of the program, a reduction of nearly 54 percent. That translates into 20,300 fewer red-light running infractions per month —and hundreds of potential serious crashes averted. As part of National Stop on Red Week, Metropolitan Police officers will be paying special attention to red-light runners at all intersections. Similar enforcement initiatives over the summer, as part of the regional Smooth Operator program, resulted in MPD officers issuing more than 10,000 tickets for various aggressive driving violations, including red-light infractions. Studies shows more than 90 percent of Americans believe red-light running is very to extremely dangerous, and the vast majority of people support the use of photo enforcement to stop red-light running. In the Washington DC area, 77 percent of those surveyed by AAA Mid-Atlantic for its Transportation Poll 2000 expressed support for red-light cameras and other photo enforcement technologies. From August 1, 1999 through July 31, 2001, 241,074 red-light camera citations were mailed, and approximately \$12.8 million in fines were collected by the District. More information about the District's photo enforcement programs, including maps of current camera locations, can be found at:

*In addition to red-light cameras, the MPD has recently begun using photo radar technology in an effort to reduce speeding on DC streets and highways. Find out more about photo radar at:*

*[mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speed.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/speed.shtm)*

[mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/redlight.shtm)

## BICYCLE HELMETS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: IT'S THE LAW IN DC!

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Summer means more children getting out and riding their bicycles on DC streets and bike trails. According to the National Safe Kids Campaign, motor vehicle collisions account for nearly 90 percent of all bicycle-related deaths in the country. To help protect our young people, the DC Council enacted a law last year requiring bicyclists under the age of 16 to wear a helmet in DC (although helmets are a good idea for cyclists of all ages). Bicyclists are also reminded to obey all traffic laws in the District, and motorists are encouraged to drive safely — and slowly — when there are bicyclists or pedestrians in sight. Get more information on DC Bicycle Helmet Law and other bike safety resources at:

[mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/bikers.shtm](http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/bikers.shtm)

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*Information, ideas or comments about this service?*

*E-mail Kevin Morison, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at [kevin.morison@dc.gov](mailto:kevin.morison@dc.gov).*

*Would you like to have this information emailed to you? Just go to our web site and register with [crimereports.com](http://crimereports.com).*

**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT WEB PAGE**  
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